

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION

1633

stricken down by a felon blow. Things were going from bad to worse as far as the internal conditions of every belligerent country *inevitable* were concerned. But in Russia there was no one in authority who had the capacity to handle the aggravating crisis. Those who were competent were ruled out of authority by the Head of the State, who was the fountain head of all official power in Russia. In these circumstances Revolution was not only inevitable—it was imperative. This will explain the attitude adopted towards the news of the Revolution by the leaders of all parties in the House of Commons. On Sir George Buchanan's advice the Cabinet decided to recognise *abdica-* the new Government. On the 16th it was known in Petrograd that the Emperor had abdicated, and soldiers marched through the town "tearing down the Imperial Eagles."⁵

When the Revolution was an accomplished fact, the British Cabinet considered its attitude towards the Russian Provisional Government, and decided to invite the House of Commons to send a resolution of fraternal greeting to the Duma. There is no more painful and difficult problem for a man than to know what to do with a good friend who has made a thorough mess of a concern in which they are jointly concerned. If you do not stand by him you feel you are abandoning a loyal comrade in his trouble. If you do, then what is left is inevitably lost. Luckily

this question did not arise. The Czar had already abdicated. There was therefore no question of personal disloyalty to one who had stood faithfully by the Allies through good and evil report. Mr. Bonar Law, as leader of the House of Commons,